



Visitor Guide

Official park guide
May 22 to October 31, 2015



Spruce Tree House



Purchase a Tour Ticket

[purchase in park...](#)
[purchase online...](#)

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Take a Hike...

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Explore on Your Own...

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Visitor Services and Facilities

Visitor Center

(Tickets, Store, and ATM)

May 22 to September 7 7:30 am to 7:00 pm
September 8 to October 31 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum

(Exhibits, Lost and Found)

May 22 to October 17 8:00 am to 6:30 pm
October 18 to October 31 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Chief Ranger's Office

(First Aid)

May 22 to October 31 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Morefield Campground Ranger Station

May 24 to August 29 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm
August 30 Closed for season

Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk

May 22 to September 7 9:00 am to 6:30 pm
September 8 to October 31 Not staffed

Picnic Areas

Chapin Mesa Picnic Area 8:00 am to sunset
Cliff Palace Picnic Area 8:00 am to sunset

Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez

May 22 to September 7 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

U.S. Post Office on Chapin Mesa

May 22 to October 31
Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 3:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Protect the Park, Protect Yourself

This partial list of regulations and laws is designed to help you have a safe and enjoyable visit, and to protect Mesa Verde's ecosystems and fragile archeological sites.

For more information, questions or additional regulations, please ask a park employee.

How you can protect park resources

Natural and cultural resources at Mesa Verde National Park are protected by federal law. It is illegal to collect artifacts, plants, animals, or natural objects. By leaving them undisturbed, all generations may enjoy and learn from them.

Chasing, capturing, feeding, or teasing wildlife is illegal and dangerous. Keep your food, cooking equipment, and garbage in your vehicle or hard-sided trailer, especially in the campground.

Fire is an important part of Mesa Verde's story. Most fires here were started naturally by lightning. Help us prevent human-caused fires by being very careful with matches, cigarettes, and campfires.

Archeological sites are fragile. Please do not sit, stand, climb, or lean on these ancient fragile structures.



Black bear

Park Entrance Fees

From May 22 to September 7, the park entry fee is \$15.00 per private car or \$8.00 per person on a motorcycle, on a bicycle, or on foot. September 8 to October 31 the fee is \$10.00 per car or \$5.00 per person. For commercial vehicle fees, call 970-529-4465 or visit www.nps.gov/meve. Federal Interagency annual access, military, and senior passes are available at the park entrance gate.

Share the road

Park roads are steep, narrow, and winding. Do not stop on the roadway; use pullouts or over-looks. Watch for wildlife, pay close attention to your speed around curves, and obey all traffic signs. Trailers and towed vehicles are not allowed beyond Morefield Campground. Extra parking is available near the park entrance.

Bicyclists, use caution! The road is steep with few shoulders. Ride single file and stay as far to the right as possible. Bicyclists, like vehicle drivers, must comply with traffic regulations. Bicycles are allowed on paved roads only. Wetherill Mesa Road is closed to bicycles.



Mule deer - enjoy from a distance

Rock Fall Alert

The park road is built on unstable soils. As a result, rocks and boulders can break loose and fall on the road, posing a hazard to you and your car. If you see boulders blocking the road, do not attempt to move them. Call 970-529-4461 or contact a park employee.

Visit a cliff dwelling safely

At 7,000 feet (2135 m) elevation, you may feel short of breath, nauseated, or tire easily. Plan ahead and know your own limits.

Trails into cliff dwellings are uneven and steep, with steps and ladders, cliff edges and tight passages, and strenuous elevation changes. Visiting cliff dwellings is not recommended for anyone with heart or respiratory problems or other physical limitations. You can view many cliff dwellings from roadway overlooks.

Water is vital

Dehydration is a common problem in Mesa Verde. Carry water with you everywhere, and drink it. You can fill reusable water bottles at all park facilities, including Cliff Palace and Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk. Food and other beverages are not allowed in archeological sites.

"Can you hear me?"

Once you drive through the park entrance, cell phone service is limited. You can find telephones and pay phones at park facilities. Wi-Fi service is available at the Morefield Campground Store, Far View Lodge, Far View Terrace, and Spruce Tree Terrace. In case of emergency, contact a park employee or call 911.

Do you need gas?

Gas is available at Morefield Campground only. You will probably drive at least 50 miles while in the park. Please plan accordingly.

Camping?

Morefield Campground is located four miles from the park entrance. It has over 250 camp sites and 15 full hook-up RV sites. There are restrooms with flush toilets, showers, a camp store, coin-operated laundry, gasoline, and an RV dumping station. Camping is not allowed elsewhere in the park. Other campgrounds are located in Cortez and Mancos, Colorado.

Pets need to be protected too

For your pet's sake, do not leave them in your vehicle without proper ventilation and water, and only when temperatures are not hazardous to their health. Leaving pets alone tied to any object is illegal.

Leashed pets may accompany you on paved roads and parking lots and in the campground. Pets are not allowed on trails, scenic overlooks, or in buildings, even if leashed. Please, clean up after your pooch. Service animals are always welcome, but therapy animals are subject to pet restrictions.

Firearms

Possession of firearms must comply with federal and state laws. Hunting and recreational use of firearms is prohibited in Mesa Verde.

Marijuana on Federal Lands

As federal property, federal laws apply in Mesa Verde National Park. Possession or use of any amount of marijuana is prohibited in the park, its facilities, concessions, and campground.

Make the Most of Your Visit

Top Five Mesa Verde Activities

Take a glimpse into an ancient culture

The Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center and Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum offer glimpses into the culture of Ancestral Pueblo people. In the Museum, look for a knife with a quartzite blade; can you imagine a hunter skinning a deer using that knife? For facility hours see page 1.

Visit a cliff dwelling community

Five cliff dwellings are open to the public. Balcony House, Cliff Palace, and Long House can be entered on ranger-guided tours only. Spruce Tree House and Step House can be explored on your own. Whatever your schedule or interests, details for how to visit a cliff dwelling are on page 5 and 12.

Explore from your car

Mesa Top Loop Road on Chapin Mesa is a six-mile drive that offers amazing canyon views and opportunities to learn about the Ancestral Pueblo people's occupation and architecture through time. To help plan your drive, read more below.

Go for a walk, hike, or bike ride

Wander Prater Ridge Trail, try to decipher the art on the Petroglyph Trail, discover the lushness of Spruce Canyon, or ride your bikes on Wetherill Mesa. Whatever you decide, taking a walk, [hike](#), or bike ride will give you a chance to see some of the park's hidden gems. See page 4 for trail specifics, and page 5 for information on bicycling or hiking Wetherill Mesa.

Attend an evening program

Looking for something later in the evening? Join the popular Twilight Tour or Photography Tour of Cliff Palace. Purchase tickets online at www.recreation.gov or go to page 7 for details. The free Morefield Campground Evening Program offers a variety of topics on both natural and cultural history. See page 6 for times.



Ancestral Puebloan knife



Green Towhee

Planning Your Visit

Whether you have a few hours or a few days, we invite you to enjoy the spectacular scenery and share a rare glimpse into the ancient culture that shaped this region for over 750 years. Here are a few suggestions for making the most of your time in the park.

If you have a half-day:

First, stop by the [Visitor and Research Center](#) at the park entrance. Rangers here will help plan your visit. While there, enjoy the exhibits and browse through the store for a selection of books and trail guides.

Twenty-one miles (33.8 km) south of the Visitor and Research Center is the [Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum](#). Here, exhibits and dioramas trace the lives of the Ancestral Pueblo people. Also available is a museum store and a 25-minute park video shown every half-hour.

Take a self-guided tour of [Spruce Tree House](#), the park's third largest and best-preserved

cliff dwelling, located adjacent to the Museum. Trail guides are available. Allow one hour for this ½-mile (0.8 km) round-trip paved trail with a 100-foot (30 m) descent and ascent. Rangers are on-site to answer your questions.

Or, take a scenic drive on the [Mesa Top Loop Road](#). Stops along the six-mile (10 km), 45-minute drive, with easily accessible, short, paved walking trails, reveal the full range of architecture from earliest pithouses to the cliff dwellings. Highlights include views of Square Tower House and Cliff Palace.

If you have one full day:

You'll have time to do all half-day activities, plus join a one-hour ranger-guided tour of either [Balcony House](#) or [Cliff Palace](#). Tickets are required. Tickets can be purchased at the Visitor and Research Center, Morefield Ranger Station, or Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez. See facilities hours on page 1.

You can also visit [Far View Sites](#), four miles (6.4 km) north of the Museum. This self-guided walk includes Far View House and four other villages plus a dry reservoir all linked by a level ¾-mile (1.2 km) dirt path. See page 5.

If you have two full days:

Drive Wetherill Mesa Road, then walk the Badger House Community Trail, and walk or ride your bicycles on the five-mile Long House Loop to overlooks. See page 5.

Add a two-hour, 2.25 mile (3.6 km) ranger-guided hiking tour of [Long House](#) on Wetherill Mesa. Tickets are required. Tickets can be purchased at the Visitor and Research Center, Morefield Ranger Station, or Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez.

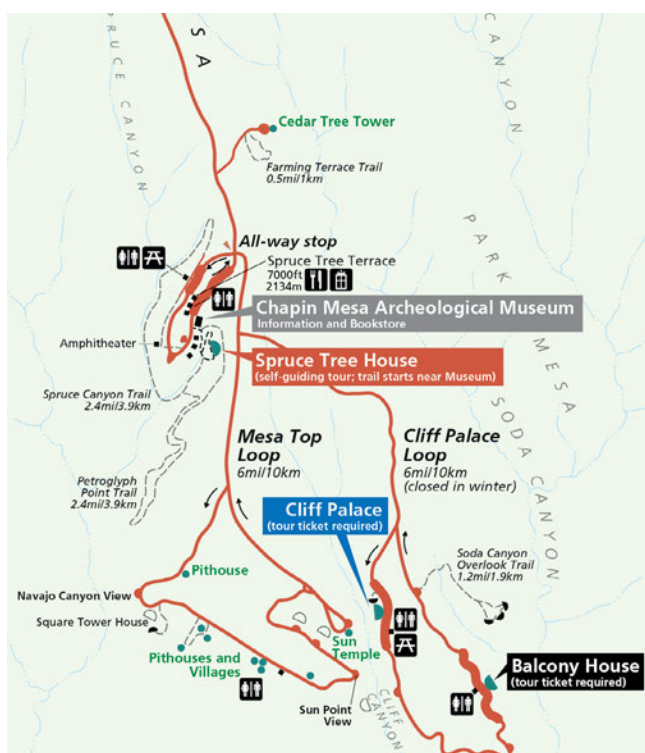
Visit [Step House](#) to view Modified Basket-maker (AD 550 to AD 750) and Classic Pueblo (AD 1100 to AD 1300) period architecture. The one-mile (1.6 km) round-trip trail begins at the information kiosk and includes a 100-foot (30 m) descent and ascent on a winding path. Allow 45 to 60 minutes.

If you have more than two full days:

You'll have the opportunity to tour all ticketed cliff dwellings, drive all the park roads, and hike one or more of the park trails. See pages 4 and 12.

Exploring on Foot

Chapin Mesa



Farming Terraces

0.5 miles (0.8 km) round-trip

Beginning and ending on the road to Cedar Tree Tower, this ½-mile loop trail leads to a series of prehistoric check dams built by Ancestral Pueblo people to create farming terraces. The check dams improved crop yields by collecting water and soil from natural run-off.

Spruce Canyon Trail

2.4 miles (3.9 km) to complete loop

This hike begins from the Spruce Tree House trail, follows the bottom of Spruce Canyon, and switchbacks up to the mesa top just northeast of the picnic area on the museum loop road. Access is available only when Spruce Tree House is open. See page 5 for times.

Petroglyph Point Trail

2.4 miles (3.9 km) to complete loop

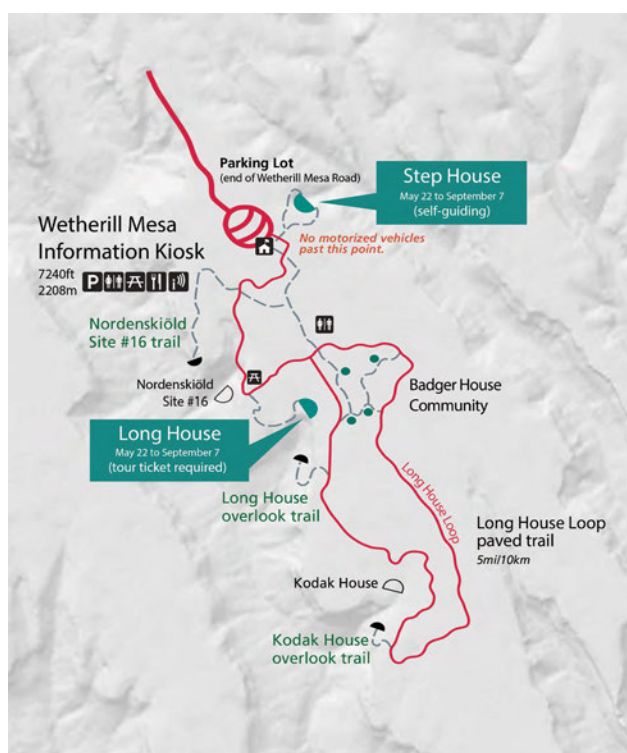
This hike begins from the Spruce Tree House trail. It follows an ancient path along the canyon wall to the largest petroglyph panel in the park. Access to trail is only available when Spruce Tree House is open. See page 5 for times.

Soda Canyon Overlook Trail

1.2 miles (1.9 km) round-trip

This easy walk begins ½ mile north of the Balcony House parking area along Cliff Palace Loop Road. The trail leads to canyon edge views of Balcony House and other archeological sites along Soda Canyon.

Wetherill Mesa



Badger House Community Trail

2.25 miles (3.6 km)

This mixed graveled path and paved trail begins at the information kiosk and winds through four mesa top sites and 600 years of history.

Nordenskiöld Site No. 16 Trail

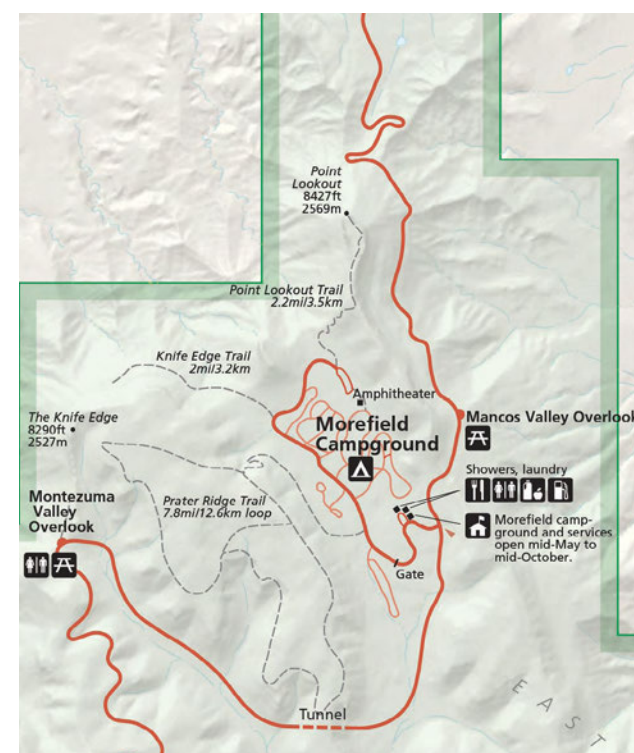
2 miles (3.2 km) round-trip

Named for Gustaf Nordenskiöld, who explored the area in 1891, this trail offers a leisurely walk through recovering fire-scarred vegetation and leads to an overlook of Nordenskiöld Site No. 16. Please note: there is no shade; bring sun protection and water.



Nordenskiöld Site No. 16 trail

Morefield Campground



Point Lookout Trail

2.2 miles (3.5 km) round-trip

Follow the switchbacks up Point Lookout and traverse the mesa top. From the top, you will see sweeping views of Montezuma and Mancos Valleys and distant mountains.

Knife Edge Trail

2 miles (3.2 km) round-trip

The trail follows the park's historic entrance road from the northwest corner of Morefield Campground towards the Montezuma Valley overlook. This unpaved level trail provides good views of the Montezuma Valley and is an excellent place to watch the sunset.

Prater Ridge Trail

7.8 miles (12.6 km) to complete north and south loops

Beginning on the west end of Morefield Campground, the north loop trail ascends Prater Ridge and follows the top of the ridge above the Montezuma Valley. The shorter south loop offers views of Prater Canyon.

Please respect these fragile places by leaving plants, animals, and artifacts undisturbed.

For your safety:

- Hiking is permitted only on designated trails
- Carry and drink plenty of water
- Stay away from cliff edges as undercut overhangs are dangerous
- Trails can be muddy and slippery after summer rains; proper footwear is recommended
- Pets are not allowed on trails

Exploring on Your Own

Chapin Mesa

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum

Dioramas and artifacts provide insight into Ancestral Pueblo people's lifeways. A 25-minute orientation film is shown on the hour and half-hour. A museum store, water, restrooms, cafe, gift shop, and post office are located nearby.

Spruce Tree House

Mesa Verde's best-preserved and third largest cliff dwelling was constructed between AD 1211 and AD 1278. This prehistoric village, built into a natural alcove, may have housed 60 to 80 people in about 130 rooms and eight kivas.

Allow 45 minutes to one hour for the 100-foot (30 m) elevation descent and ascent on a paved, winding path. The trail is ½ mile (0.8 km) round-trip and begins at the Museum. Rangers are on-site to answer your questions.

May 22 to September 7

8:30 am to 6:30 pm

September 8 to October 17

9:00 am to 6:30 pm

October 18 to October 31

9:00 am to 5:00 pm



Far View Sites

Far View Sites

This mesa top community includes Far View House, four other villages, and a dry reservoir. On this trail you can explore Ancestral Pueblo people's life from AD 900 to AD 1300. The level, unpaved ¾-mile trail (1.2 km) is open 8:00 am to sunset.

Wetherill Mesa

Wetherill Mesa Road

Less crowded than Chapin Mesa with only biking and hiking trails, Wetherill Mesa offers a quiet setting to appreciate the archeological sites and scenery. If you plan to visit Long House while you are on Wetherill Mesa, be sure to purchase a ticket at the Visitor and Research Center at the park entrance.

The 29-mile (46.8 km) drive from the Visitor and Research Center follows the northern and western boundary of the park, offering spectacular views of the surrounding valleys. Allow 1¼ hours for this drive.

Wetherill Mesa Road is open 8:00 am to sunset. Vehicles must be less than 25 feet (7.6 m) long to drive this road. Vehicles over 8,000 lbs GVW are prohibited. Bicycles are not allowed on this main road. Wetherill Mesa closes on October 31 or when weather conditions close the road.



Bicycling the Long House Loop paved trail

Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk and Long House Loop Trail

At the end of the Wetherill Mesa Road, you will find a parking area and the beginning of the Long House Loop, from which you may hike or bicycle the various trails. Wetherill Mesa has two seasonal operations, summer and fall. For more detailed information on Wetherill Mesa activities, pick up a seasonal Wetherill Mesa Visitor Guide.

May 22 to September 7

The Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk is open 9:00 am to 6:30 pm. Picnic tables, restrooms, sales area, and snack service are all located nearby. **Step House**, one of the only alcove sites that contains evidence of both Basketmaker and Pueblo-era occupation, is open daily from 11:15 am to 4:15 pm.

September 8 to October 31 (date of closure is weather dependent)

Wetherill Mesa is open for biking and hiking, but the information kiosk is not staffed at this time. No services are available.



Accessibility

Access to Mesa Verde's premier sites is physically challenging. Most cliff dwelling trails are steep and uneven, with steps and ladders, cliff edges and tight passages, and include strenuous elevation changes. However, many cliff dwellings and mesa top sites are visible from roadway overlooks, short paved trails, and from your vehicle.

For assistance, ask a park employee, or call 970-529-4465 for more information.

Accessible services:

Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center

Designated parking, restrooms, exhibits, an ATM, a drinking fountain, and a wheelchair available for loan. Audio description and assistive listening available.

Far View Sites

Designated parking and a portable restroom. An unpaved gravel ¾-mile (1.2 km) level trail to six archeological sites.

Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum Area

Designated parking, restrooms, exhibits, a drinking fountain, pay phones, and a ramp. Services include a portable ramp to enter exhibit rooms, a wheelchair available for loan, and a 25-minute orientation film with captions, audio description, and assistive listening.

Spruce Tree House

There are no ladders or steps on this paved, steep, ½-mile (0.8 km) round-trip trail that descends 100 feet (30 m). Four benches are available for the moderately strenuous return trip. If you prefer, you can view Spruce Tree House from a covered patio behind the Chief Ranger's Office, adjacent to the Museum.

Mesa Top and Cliff Palace Loop Roads

Designated parking, restrooms, and paved trails are located along each six-mile (10 km) loop road. Binoculars are helpful for cross-canyon views of cliff dwellings, including Cliff Palace and Square Tower House.

Wetherill Mesa

Designated parking, restrooms, picnic tables, and information kiosk.

Park Ranger Programs- No fee

Discover Mesa Verde with these free programs given by park rangers. Stop in at the Visitor and Research Center and Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum for details. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Programs may be cancelled during inclement weather. For information on touring a cliff dwelling, see page 12.



Morefield Campground Evening Program

Enjoy a National Park Service evening tradition! Archeologist Jesse Fewkes began the first evening campfire talks in the history of the National Park Service at Mesa Verde National Park in 1907.

Today, that tradition continues. Join a ranger in the Morefield Campground Amphitheater to learn about Mesa Verde's fascinating natural and cultural history. Topics vary by night and can include Ancestral Puebloan history, plants and animals of the park, dark night skies, regional resources, and more.

There is no fee. Bring a flashlight.

May 23 to July 26	9:00 pm
July 27 to August 23	8:30 pm
August 24 to September 6	8:15 pm

Park Fun For Kids

Junior Ranger Program

Hey, kids! Become a Junior Ranger and have a fun time learning about Mesa Verde National Park. Becoming a Junior Ranger is a great way to explore your national parks and help take care of them for the future.

Activity Booklet

Children from age 4 to 12 can become a Junior Ranger. Just pick up a free activity booklet at the Visitor and Research Center or Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, explore the park, and complete the activities. When done, take the booklet to any park information center for review.



A special Mesa Verde Junior Ranger badge is awarded for a job well done.

Junior Ranger Station

Visit the Mesa Verde Junior Ranger Station at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum for some extra Junior Ranger fun. Learn more about the Ancestral Pueblo people with kid-friendly exhibits or hands-on activities. This is a great place to be sworn in as a Mesa Verde Junior Ranger and receive your badge.

Located Inside Museum Courtyard

June 15 to August 14

3:00 pm to 5:30 pm*

*Open longer when staffing allows

Discovering Morefield Campground

Camping is a wonderful time to discover the natural side of Mesa Verde. For a fun, family-oriented way to explore your natural surroundings, pick up a Junior Naturalist Activity Booklet and check out a Discovery Pack.



Morefield Campground Ranger Station

May 24 to August 29

5:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Junior Ranger Station (in Museum)

June 15 to August 14

3:00 pm to 5:30 pm



Park Ranger Programs- Fee



Mesa Verde offers visitors opportunities to explore the backcountry of the park. Purchase tickets for these special hikes and tours online at www.recreation.gov. Tickets are non-refundable. *For a ranger-guided tour of Balcony House, Cliff Palace, or Long House, see page 12.*

Square Tower House

Square Tower House is a stunning and surprisingly intimate cliff dwelling. Special aspects of this site include an original kiva roof and the Crow’s Nest, features hidden from the viewpoint but seen in the site. This strenuous 2-hour, 1-mile (2.6 km) round-trip hike is along an unpaved, uneven trail that descends 100 feet (30 m), and includes steep drop-offs, switchbacks, climbing three ladders (up to 20 feet [6.1 m]), and scrambling up and down boulders. May not be appropriate for young children.

- May 3 to May 24 (Saturdays and Sundays) and September 10 to October 18 (Thursdays and Sundays) at 8:00 am
- Tour is limited to 10 people
- Price: \$25.00 per person, all ages

Oak Tree House

Oak Tree House has 60 rooms built on two ledges. Enjoy close up views of this well-preserved but fragile site that features plastered walls and varied architectural styles. You will also have stunning vistas of Cliff Canyon, Cliff Palace, and Sun Temple. This 2-hour, 1-mile (1.6 km) round-trip hike is moderately strenuous. Expect a narrow, unpaved, uneven trail, with steps carved into the sandstone, steep drop-offs, and two ladders (4- and 15-foot) (1.2 m to 4.6 m). Total elevation change is 200 feet (61 m). Children must be able to walk the extent of the trail on their own without difficulty.

- May 26 to September 5 (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) at 8:00 am
- Tour is limited to 10 people
- Price: \$25.00 per person, all ages

Wetherill Mesa Bike and Hike Adventure

If you like both hiking and biking, the Wetherill Mesa Bike & Hike Adventure is for you. This ranger-guided, 4.5 hour, 9-mile (14.5 km) trek is for those seeking an in-depth Mesa Verde experience with a ranger. It includes about 5 miles (8.1 km) of biking and 4 miles (6.4 km) of hiking. Expansive canyon views, spectacular overlooks of remote cliff dwellings, and a tour of the magnificent Long House are all part of this adventure.

- May 27 to September 6 (Wednesdays and Sundays) at 9:30 am
- Tour is limited to 15 people
- Price: \$18.00 per adult; \$15.00 for children

Know Before You Go

Your safety depends on good judgment, adequate preparation, and constant attention. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, and bring plenty of water. Shade is limited, so bring a hat and sunscreen. Evaluate your physical condition when choosing a hike.

Elevations range between 7,000 and 7,500 feet (2134 m and 2286 m) above sea level. You should plan for all weather possibilities because weather conditions are quite variable. It’s possible to begin your hike in full sun and end with a thunderstorm or a snowstorm.

What To Bring

Bring a minimum of ½ gallon (2 liters) of water per person. You will also need a daypack large enough to carry water, sunscreen, hat, rainwear, binoculars, and camera. Wear sturdy hiking shoes. Please do not bring any type of snack or food, or drinks other than water into a cliff dwelling.

Restrictions

Due to overhanging branches, uneven terrain, and footing obscured by vegetation, children must be able to keep pace with the group and walk the extent of the trail on their own without difficulty. Children in backpacks are not permitted on these special backcountry tours.

Please understand that once you begin these hikes, neither you nor your children may “turn around” as there will be no ranger to escort you back to the trailhead. Carefully consider the distance and difficulty of this hike before purchasing a ticket.

Please Be On Time

Please be at your hike departure location, ready to go, at least 15 minutes early. The park road is narrow and winding, and can take 45 to 60 minutes to drive from the park entrance to departure locations. To be fair to others, the tour may leave without you if you are late. Please plan accordingly.

Cliff Palace Twilight Tour

Meet a character from Mesa Verde’s past on a 90-minute evening tour of Cliff Palace. This is a unique opportunity to learn about North America’s largest cliff dwelling through the eyes of the people who found, stabilized, and preserved it in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| •Tours offered Sundays to Thursdays | •Tour is limited to 20 people |
| May 24 to July 23 | 7:15 pm |
| July 26 to September 6 | 6:45 pm |
| •Price: \$12.00 per person, | |
| | all ages |

Cliff Palace Photography Tour

Photographers, here is chance to spend 90 minutes in Cliff Palace in a small group setting with a park ranger. Dramatic sunset lighting will appeal to both amateur and professional photographers as well as those seeking a deeper connection with this extraordinary archeological treasure.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| •Tours offered Fridays and Saturdays | •Tour is limited to 10 people |
| May 22 to July 25 | 7:15 pm |
| July 31 to September 5 | 6:45 pm |
| •Price: \$20.00 per person, | |
| | all ages |

Special Events



A Vibrant Culture

Contemporary Pueblo people from Hopi, Zuni, and the Rio Grande Pueblos are descendants of Ancestral Pueblo people of Mesa Verde. This summer, the park will host Pueblo artisans and dancers as they share their vibrant culture. These special events will be held at the Visitor and Research Center, located near the park entrance just off U.S. Highway 160.

July 4 and 5: The Hopi dance group from Shungopavi village on Second Mesa has been coming to Mesa Verde for the last 26 years. This summer, the Lomayestewa family invites you to view traditional Hopi dances scheduled both days at 11:00 am, 12:00 pm, 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm.

September 12: Starr Tafoya from Santa Clara Pueblo has given pottery demonstrations at Mesa Verde for over 16 years. She is an award winner at the Santa Fe Indian Market. Join her at 10:30 am for a demonstration, firing, and sale of her black and redware pottery.



Four Corners Lecture Series

The Four Corners Lecture Series is sponsored by several local entities. The 2015 lecture series theme is "It's About Time." Each hosting organization will sponsor speakers who have expertise in a subject relating to that theme. Visit www.nps.gov/meve to see a list of all speakers and subjects for each free presentation. The following will be held at Far View Lodge in Mesa Verde National Park.

May 13: Peter Pino from Zia Pueblo - *Highlights of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Consultation at Mesa Verde from 1993 to 2013.*

June 25: Sally Cole - *Birds in Ancestral Pueblo Rock Art and Culture.*

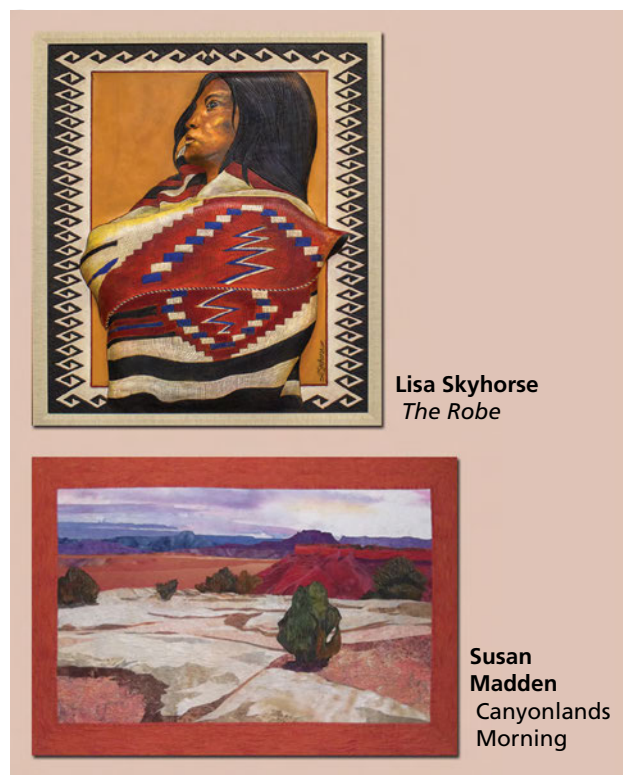
July 30: Lara Lloyd - *Race, Science, and Burials: The Impacts of NAGPRA on Mesa Verde.*

August 13: Dr. Lillian Wakeley - *Preponderance of Evidence: The Intersection of Geology, NAGPRA, and Kennewick Man.*

September 18: Paul Morey - *The Elk of Mesa Verde.*

September 24: David Lee - *Honoring Ancient Ancestors: How We Can Use the Lessons of the Past to Build a Better Future.*

Mesa Verde Artist-in-Residence Program



Lisa Skyhorse
The Robe

Susan
Madden
Canyonlands
Morning

Mesa Verde National Park's [Artist-in-Residence \(AIR\) program](http://www.nps.gov/meve) provides professional writers, composers, and visual and performing artists the opportunity to pursue their particular art form while being surrounded by the park's inspiring ancient architecture and natural landscape.

Mesa Verde's AIR program is managed by the Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA), a nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. The works completed under this program contribute to the public understanding and appreciation of our national parks, create a legacy preserved for future generations, and offer park visitors and the public an opportunity to see our heritage through the eyes and ears of contributing artists.

Five artists are selected annually to live in the park for two weeks during the spring or fall pursuing their craft. They will each present a free public demonstration, performance or talk during their residency.

Public presentations will be offered on:

May 7 (Jerry Fleury, photographer), **May 21** (David Arkenstone, musician/composer), **September 10** (Susan Madden, landscape quilter), **September 24** (Lisa Skyhorse, saddle making and leather painting), and **October 8** (Milt Beens, plein air in oil).

Ask a park employee or contact MVMA at 970-529-4445 for specific time, location, and subject for these presentations. For more Artist-in-Residence program information, please visit http://www.nps.gov/meve/getinvolved/supportyourpark/artists_in_residence.htm.

Preserving Cliff Palace



Southern end of Cliff Palace built on unstable soil and rubble.



Ranger-guided tour encircling Kiva F, on southern end of site.



Temporary brace set up to stabilize leaning wall of Kiva F.

Cliff Palace, the park's most famous cliff dwelling, is the focus of extensive preservation efforts starting in 2015. In May, 2011, archeologists discovered extensive cracks, wall deformation, and structural movement in the southern half of Cliff Palace. Park staff and experts from around the country have been working to document the character and extent of deterioration, and to develop a plan to carry out the required emergency stabilization. Much of this work has been "behind the scenes" and not detected by most park visitors. But starting this year, the work is expected to be more noticeable.

Teams of archeologists and stabilization experts will be actively working in the southern end of the Cliff Palace alcove during the spring and fall months. Their work will focus on areas near the southern section of the retaining wall. The root of Cliff Palace's structural problems is the foundation – or the lack of a stable foundation –

upon which the entire southern end of the community was built in the 13th century. Although the northern areas appear firmly based on bedrock, the southern end is footed in loose, unconsolidated soil and rubble. After nearly eight centuries, this lack of a solid base has caused the structures in the southern end of the site to slide downhill at uneven rates, leading to cracks, falling walls, and general instability.

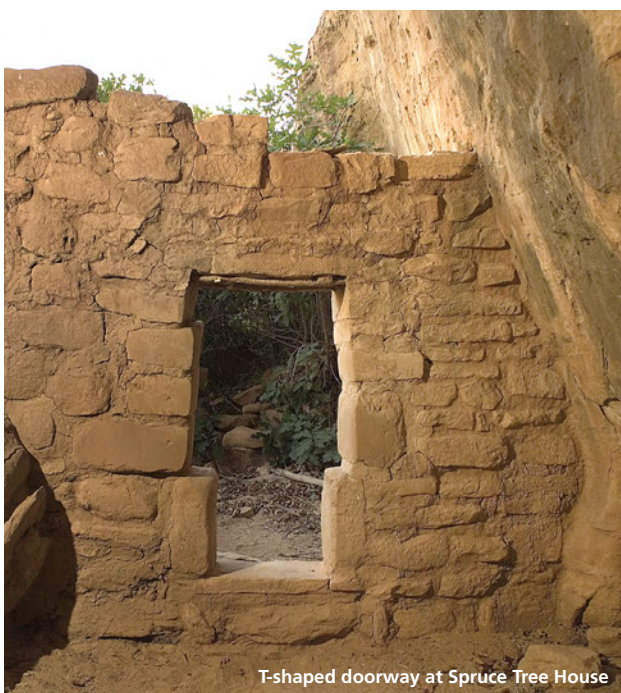
Cliff Palace was closed to tours this spring to allow the park's preservation team to begin initial repairs on the unstable foundations. This summer, the preservation teams are analyzing the data from their spring work and preparing for the fall preservation phase. Although the decision about whether Cliff Palace will be open through the fall will be based on the data collected this spring, it is likely Cliff Palace will close again for tours in early September if continuing preservation work cannot be safely

done while visitors are in the site. The work will continue until winter weather prevents access or freezing temperatures make masonry work impractical.

Why is it important to take these steps to stabilize and preserve Cliff Palace now? Cliff Palace is a significant place to millions of people who have walked its ancient pathways. It is particularly important in the traditions of the Pueblo people of the American Southwest. It also is a much-beloved part of Mesa Verde. National parks, including Mesa Verde, exist thanks to citizens who, more than 100 years ago, committed to setting aside these special places for the future. We are the beneficiaries of that trust. In what condition shall we pass Cliff Palace along to our children?

For additional information on the history and current efforts to preserve Cliff Palace, visit the park website at www.nps.gov/meve.

Doorways to the Past



T-shaped doorway at Spruce Tree House

Doorways are one architectural feature that archeologists study to help them piece together elements of the Ancestral Pueblo past.

There are two basic types of doorways common to late masonry pueblos in the Mesa Verde region --rectangular and T-shaped. Because of the many well-preserved cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park, archeologists have been able to determine patterns in the placement and use of these doorways. The small rectangular openings allowed entry and exit from private, domestic spaces such as living rooms and granaries. Many of these could be closed for security or privacy. The characteristic T-shaped doorways appear to have provided access to public spaces such as centralized plazas, and were usually open. The ability to distinguish between domestic and public use doorways is an important step in ultimately determining

room function, population size, and social make-up of pueblos and cliff dwellings.

The origins of T-shaped doorways are unknown. Were they simply designed for ease of passage, or were they symbolic? Symbolism is suggested by the occasional appearance of T-shaped niches and windows or loopholes that seem to mimic the doorways. The shape is found throughout the Colorado Plateau and as far south as Paquimé and other sites in Chihuahua, Mexico. The earliest well-dated examples of T-shaped doorways are found throughout the charismatic 11th century pueblos of Chaco Canyon.

Whatever the meaning, it is certain that these simple passages represent a universal connection between Ancestral Pueblo people of the greater southwest.

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Providing Memories, Inspiring Stewardship

Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA) is the innovative educational nonprofit partner that inspires life-long stewardship of Mesa Verde's cultural and natural heritage. Since 1930, MVMA has supported education and research in the park through an active publishing program, membership program, in-depth learning opportunities, and retail stores. Proceeds from all our programs generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in park support each year.

You Can Make a Difference!

You can help preserve and protect the park for future generations by becoming a Mesa Verde Association member today!

Your tax-deductible membership dues will support the work of both MVMA and the Mesa Verde Foundation, the park's capital fundraising partner. Members receive a discount in MVMA stores and online, periodic e-newsletters, a year-end gift, and discounts at most cooperating association bookstores in national parks and other public lands across the country. To ask about membership at MVMA stores, call us at 970-529-4445, or visit our website at www.mesaverde.org/membership.



Replica pottery

Enhance Your Visit

You'll find an outstanding selection of Mesa Verde publications and products at our stores that will help you further explore and appreciate this park's incomparable cultural and natural resources. MVMA stores are located in the Visitor and Research Center, Morefield Ranger Station, Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, and Colorado Welcome Center at 928 East Main Street in Cortez, and online at www.mesaverde.org.



Visitor and Research Center Store

Mesa Verde Museum Association

10% off your purchase

Present this coupon at the register.

Redeemable at MVMA stores in the Visitor and Research Center, Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, Wetherill Mesa Kiosk, Morefield Ranger Station, and Colorado Welcome Center in Cortez.

Coupon is good on all regularly priced items.
Not valid with other discounts.

Expiration date: 12/31/2015

Just for Mesa Verde Junior Rangers!



We've designed a special colorful logo to recognize Mesa Verde Junior Rangers! It features the tower from Square Tower House cliff dwelling (which you can see from the Mesa Top Loop), a brightly-colored collared lizard, an Ancestral Puebloan black-on-white pottery design found in the Mesa Verde region, and the iconic "flat hat" that park rangers wear. We offer a variety of educational products and apparel for every Junior Ranger that features this distinctive logo. Come see our selection today.

Kids who present their completed Mesa Verde Junior Ranger booklet and their badge at any MVMA store will receive a 15% discount on their entire purchase!

ARAMARK Concession Services

Experience this World Heritage site



See Cliff Palace on the 700 Years guided tour



Kiva Room at Far View Lodge



Native Handcrafts from Eight Tribes



Award-winning Metate Room Cuisine



Concessions at Mesa Verde National Park are managed by Aramark and authorized by the National Park Service.

FOOD, SHOPPING, GUIDED TOURS, CAMPING AND LODGING



MUSEUM & SPRUCE TREE HOUSE AREA

Spruce Tree Terrace: (OPEN: Year-round except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) Café and Gift Shop



MESA VERDE
—COLORADO—

(800) 449-2288, (970) 529-4422 locally, or visit and book on-line at visitmesaverde.com

Touring a Cliff Dwelling

Cliff Palace and Balcony House are popular ranger-guided cliff dwelling tours. During periods of high demand, you may be asked to choose only one of these tours per day.

A tour of Long House, located on Wetherill Mesa, can be taken on the same day as the Cliff Palace or Balcony House tours.

Tour tickets are \$4.00 per tour, per person, regardless of age. (Pass discounts do not apply.)

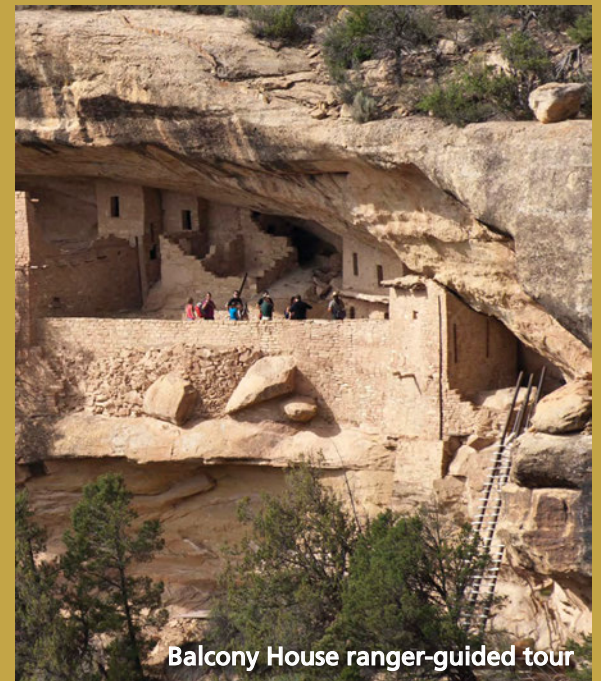
Purchase tour tickets at:

- Visitor and Research Center
- Morefield Ranger Station
- Colorado Welcome Center, Cortez
- Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum (limited hours, see hint below)**

For hours of operation, see Visitor Services section on page 1.

Hint: You'll get the best selection of times for ranger-guided tours at the **Visitor and Research Center, **Morefield Ranger Station**, or the **Colorado Welcome Center**. Options may be more limited at the Museum.

Tickets will be sold at the Museum from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm through September 7. (After September 7, ticket sales hours will be reduced. Ask a ranger for times.)



Balcony House ranger-guided tour

Cliff Palace

Mesa Verde's Largest Cliff Dwelling

On this one-hour tour you will descend uneven stone steps and climb four ladders, with an elevation change of 100 feet (30 m). Total walking distance is ¼ mile (0.4 km). Tour begins near the Cliff Palace overlook, a 23-mile (37 km) one-hour drive from the Visitor and Research Center.

May 22 to September 7

Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

September 8 to October 17

To Be Announced*

October 18 to October 31

To Be Announced*

November 1: Closed for season

*See page 9 for details on preservation work this fall.

Balcony House

Most Adventurous Cliff Dwelling Tour

On this one-hour tour you will climb a 32-foot (9.8 m) ladder, crawl through an 18-inch wide (45 cm) and 12-foot (3.7 m) long tunnel, and climb up a 60-foot (20 m) open cliff face with stone steps and two 10-foot (3 m) ladders to exit. The tour begins at the north end of the Balcony House parking lot, a 25-mile (40.2 km), 1¼ hours drive from the Visitor and Research Center.

May 22 to August 22

Every half-hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

August 23 to October 17*

Every hour: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

October 18: Closed for season

*Additional tours may be added when possible.

Long House

Most In-Depth Tour

This two-hour tour involves hiking about 2.25 miles (3.6 km) round-trip, and climbing two 15-foot (4.5 m) ladders within the site. Elevation gain is about 130 feet (40 m). The tour ends at the Long House trailhead, giving you the option of exploring more of Wetherill Mesa on your own. The tour begins at the Wetherill Mesa Information Kiosk, a 29-mile (46.8 km) drive from the Visitor and Research Center. Allow 1¼ hours for this drive. Vehicles over 25 feet (8 m) long are not allowed on the Wetherill Mesa Road.

May 22 to September 7

9:30 am, 10:30 am, 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm

September 8: Closed for season



Cliff Palace entrance trail (left) and exit trail (right)



Balcony House entrance ladder



One of the 15-foot (4.6 m) ladders

See page 7 for information on additional ranger-guided hikes and how to purchase tickets for them.